

VZCZCXRO8801  
OO RUEHDE RUEHDIR  
DE RUEHAD #1949/01 3331224  
ZNR UUUUU ZZH  
O 291224Z NOV 07  
FM AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 0130  
RHMFIUU/SECNAV WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE  
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE  
RHEHAAA/WHITE HOUSE WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY  
RHEHNSC/WHITE HOUSE NSC WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY  
RUEHZM/GULF COOPERATION COUNCIL COLLECTIVE  
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON 1233  
RHBVAKS/COMUSNAVCENT

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 ABU DHABI 001949

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

STATE FOR NEA/ARP; NEA/PPD; NEA/RA; INR/R/MR; PA; INR/NESA; INR/B;  
RRU-NEA  
IIP/G/NEA-SA  
WHITE HOUSE FOR PRESS OFFICE; NSC  
SECDEF FOR OASD/PA  
USCINCCENT FOR POLAD  
LONDON FOR SREEBNY

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [OIIP](#) [KMDR](#) [TC](#)

SUBJECT: SPECIAL MEDIA REACTION: ANNAPOLIS (2)

¶1. SUMMARY: A Lebanese columnist in "Al-Khaleej" believes that Annapolis will do nothing but buy time and calm for Arab leaders at the expense of Palestinians and suggests that the situation will not truly improve until the Arab people revolt to reclaim their confiscated rights. A UAE writer in "Al-Khaleej" opines that the Middle East has been ruined by popular obeisance to peace imposed from without through occupation. "Al-Bayan" editorialized that President Bush's statement that "America cannot impose its will" is not about "cannot", but more a revelation that he simply does not want to. The editorial in "Al-Khaleej" considers Annapolis a belated public relations party. A columnist in "Al-Khaleej" regards the statement of agreement from Annapolis as unworthy of an international conference, especially one that includes Arabs, because it gives no regard to Arab interests and demands. A columnist in "Al-Khaleej" bemoans the frustrating habit of American Presidents of suddenly leaping to pursue peace between Palestinians and Israelis only in their last year in office. "Al-Bayan" says that the party in Annapolis is now over and the real test is what lies ahead. End Summary.

¶2. Under the headline "Who will surrender Annapolis", a Lebanese columnist, Saad Mehio, wrote 11/28 op-ed in "Al-Khaleej" (circulation 90,000):

"Why are we hearing fewer Arab voices opposing normalization and peace imported/imposed from outside? Perhaps because Arab and Palestinian leaders are fed up with the Palestinian issue and are now driven towards submitting to Annapolis' will. This conference is not a peace conference but rather a carnival, aiming towards an imposed surrender that creates a new 'fait accompli'. If you think the leaders are tired, the people are more so. We have learned from history that when leaders surrender, their [authority] comes to an end and surrender becomes only a temporary truce until people revolt to restore their confiscated rights. That is what Annapolis will bring."

¶3. Under the headline "Annapolis' premature baby", UAE writer, Ahmed Ibrahim, wrote 11/28 op-ed in "Al-Khaleej"

"Israelis and Arabs are like the patient who took an entire kidney from his neighbor, and after recuperating and leaving the hospital, he asks his neighbor for his second kidney because he is not

satisfied with one!"

"When the American President George Bush sent the invitations to the Annapolis meeting aiming to realize peace between the Palestinians and Israel, a question quickly came to our minds: how does one who has always been beating the drums of war call for peace? How can we believe this kind of talk?"

"People in the region love peace because people by their nature do not like wars. The Middle East region has always been a place of coexistence. The tools of peace, art, and science were (historically) more available than tools of war that are imported from abroad. This all changed when something called Israel was transplanted in the heart of the region as an expansionist oppressive entity that increased the tools of war and aggression including tanks, planes and bombs."

"What has spoiled the Middle East is our dependence on imported peace imposed by occupation, and our agreement to give the occupier both of our kidneys instead of just one. We can restore this old-time peace which we have missed when we rely on the brave Arab horse, and not on horses borrowed from Washington or elsewhere."

¶4. Under the headline "A non-exchangeable currency", the 11/28 editorial in Dubai-based Arabic daily "Al-Bayan" (circulation 85,000) read:

"Among all the statements made by the Bush Administration on the Annapolis conference, its prospects, and the goodwill behind it, one needs to pause at six words spoken by Mr. Bush. These words [foreshadow] a modest outcome from this Forum, assuming that it produces anything at all. He said, 'America is unable to impose its will'."

ABU DHABI 00001949 002 OF 002

[This is an inherent contradiction with the words of] "Secretary Rice, who led the effort to convene this forum, [and who] said that many American circles are determined that Annapolis lead to meaningful and productive negotiations. She indicated more than once that she enjoys the support of President Bush and that he agreed to move the peace process in that direction."

"Zbigniew Brzezinski, National Security Adviser to Jimmy Carter, was frank and honest when he said that based on his concrete experience, without American pressure imposed on Israel to accept an American plan, Tel Aviv will not waver, and the settlement will not be realized. If President Bush had said during his speech that he does not intend to impose his vision, he might have seemed credible. But to say that he is not capable of doing so is currency that we just can't buy".

¶5. Under the headline "Annapolis mirage", the editorial in Sharjah-based Arabic daily "Al-Khaleej" read:

"The meeting was not a negotiating framework for the Palestinians and the Israelis, but rather a public relations party at which the Palestinians did not read the papers of previous conferences, and did contemplate the changes that have occurred during the past a decade and a half - [a time] when time, territories and nerves were wasted and so much blood was shed. The negotiations ultimately turned into a long nightmare."

¶6. Under the headline "Agreement of No Agreement", a columnist, Hussam Kanafani, wrote 11/29 op-ed in "Al-Khaleej":

"The statement of agreement in Annapolis is not an achievement worthy of an international conference, especially not an Arab one, because Arab demands were not taken into account. The statement avoided any reference to the Arab peace initiative and touched nothing but the "roadmap", particularly its first stage, which means security considerations that will be difficult, if not impossible, to overcome..."

¶7. Under the headline "From Carter to Bush: Peace Follies", a Lebanese columnist, Saad Mehio, wrote 11/29 op-ed in "Al-Khaleej":

"Why do American Presidents insist on trying to solve the Middle East crisis during the last year of their term?"

"It seems that the illusion of working for peace is more important than peace itself... This certainly applies to President Bush, who [hopes to] transform himself from a lame duck in the last year of his Presidency into a heavenly bird carrying peace (or, rather, his illusion of peace) to the land of peace."

"It is an entertaining game that every American President likes to play whenever he reaches the end of his term. It is frankly becoming boring and nauseous for us to see this repetition!"

¶8. Under the headline "The Party is over and now is the test", the 11/29 editorial in Dubai-based Arabic daily "Al-Bayan" read:

"Negotiators entered the examination room [Annapolis] where attention is all set.... The moment, as described by the Palestinian President, is unrepeatable; so the cost of failure this time is beyond endurance, given the drastic conditions in the region."

SISON